



# AFN Position Paper on the Terminology “Indigenous Peoples and local communities”

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## Assembly of First Nations

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is a national advocacy organization that works to advance the collective aspirations of First Nations individuals and communities across Canada on matters of national or international nature and concern.

The AFN hosts at least two Assemblies each year where mandates and directives for the organization are established through resolutions directed and supported by the First Nations-in-Assembly (elected Chiefs or proxies from member First Nations).

In addition to the direction provided by Chiefs of each member First Nation, the AFN is guided by an Executive Committee consisting of an elected National Chief and Regional Chiefs from each province and territory. Representatives from five national councils (Knowledge Keepers, Youth, Veterans, 2SLGBTQIA+ and Women) support and guide the decisions of the Executive Committee.

The AFN consistently participates in international fora and draws upon international law and international initiatives for insight on several activities, including resolution development; national and international advocacy; and research, planning and execution, among others. Participation at the international level enables the AFN to build solidarity among Indigenous Peoples globally, while drawing upon international law and strategy to assert Indigenous rights.

Work undertaken by First Nations in international fora and on international mechanisms supports and affirms the ongoing work of First Nations domestically and locally. The AFN is mandated by First Nations-in-Assembly to advocate for the advancement and protection of First Nations rights (and by extension the rights of Indigenous Peoples), First Nations climate leadership, First Nations leadership in conservation, and a First Nations’ pathway to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), among others. As such, the AFN continues to participate in various UN fora including the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

## 1. Introduction

Over the last 30 years, there has been a growing global trend by states and intergovernmental organizations to combine Indigenous Peoples with local communities through use of the term “Indigenous Peoples and local communities” often referred to in short as “IPLC”. Simultaneously, there has been increasing recognition of the contributions that Indigenous Peoples and local communities have made to nature and the need to transform traditional power dynamics to address the acute climate and biodiversity crisis. Rights-based approaches are thus increasingly adopted in multilateral environmental agreements, such as at the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), resulting in multiple references to “the rights of IPLCs.”



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This issue is current and internationally recognized, with several United Nations bodies who focus on Indigenous issues calling for the decoupling of local communities and any other term, from references to Indigenous Peoples. Although the motives for grouping Indigenous Peoples with local communities are unclear, doing so diminishes the distinct rights and status of First Nations and other Indigenous Peoples. These rights are enshrined in international law via the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) and other related international instruments. It is unacceptable for States and intergovernmental organizations to undermine First Nations rights, and Indigenous Peoples rights more broadly. Indigenous Peoples are politically organized in the struggle to secure the recognition of our distinct rights as self-determining Peoples and our status by the international community. In contrast, local communities do not appear to be a self-organized constituency within any intergovernmental organization.

In the following pages, we briefly introduce the origin of First Nation rights, as well as the international mechanisms protecting those rights and of all Indigenous Peoples. Following this discussion, we discuss the emergence of the “IPLC” terminology and highlight First Nations concerns about the increasing use of the collective term. We then introduce seven recommendations to prevent the further erosion of the interrelated, interdependent, and indivisible rights of First Nations and other Indigenous Peoples:

1. Reaffirm the distinct status and rights of First Nations, as rights-holders, in all discussions.
2. Implement the use of capital letters in all UN texts when referring to Indigenous Peoples, as well as Indigenous persons, Indigenous children, and Indigenous women, as adopted in December 2022 by the UN General Assembly (Resolution A/77/460).
3. Remove the false equivalency of rights between Indigenous Peoples and local communities to reflect the rights reaffirmed in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
4. Uphold the clear distinction between “knowledge of Indigenous Peoples” and “local knowledge” in all UN texts and cease the use of the term “Indigenous and local knowledge
5. Separate “Indigenous Peoples and local communities” as a collective concept in all UN discussions, including climate, biodiversity, and intellectual property.
6. Support First Nations and Indigenous Peoples as they push for enhanced participation status in all elements of the United Nations
7. Support inter-agency collaboration to ensure that UN bodies on but not limited to climate change, biodiversity, and intellectual property endorse previous and future recommendations from the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



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## 2. Context

### 2.1. First Nations Rights at the National and International Stage

First Nations across Canada have their own laws, languages, members, territories, and governance systems. First Nations hold the right to self-determination as Peoples. Their relationships with the Crown are founded on inherent rights, as well as historic treaties, the numbered treaties, self-government agreements, and other arrangements. Prior to European contact, First Nations had viable and thriving social, political, and legal systems.<sup>1</sup> Through these systems, First Nations exercised sovereignty over their lands, waters, and resources. When Europeans arrived, First Nations continued to exercise their sovereignty, which the British Crown clearly acknowledged and accepted when it began the process of negotiating Treaties.

Positively, the distinct legal status of First Nations has evolved in Canada over the last 30 years, further to the constitutional enshrinement of their rights following the adoption of the *Constitution Act*, 1982, and the evolving jurisprudence on the rights of First Nations in Canada associated with same. Section 35 of the *Constitution Act* recognizes and affirms the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada.<sup>2</sup>

The adoption of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (UNDRIPA) in June 2021 offers clear direction for Canada to affirm the UN Declaration as a universal international human rights instrument with application in Canadian law, while also establishing a framework for the Government of Canada's implementation of the UN Declaration. Though implementation is ongoing, the introduction of UNDRIPA offers new opportunities for First Nations to exercise their internationally recognized inherent right to self-determination. At an international level, the UN Declaration is the most seminal international instrument for First Nations, which clearly and unequivocally laid out the individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples worldwide as distinct Peoples.

Within Canada, First Nations continue to push their legal status as self-determining Peoples in domestic legislation. Recent legislation (*e.g.*, *Indigenous Languages Act* and *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth, and families*) affirm the recognition and implementation of First Nations rights to self-determination, including the inherent right to self-government.

### 2.2. Emergence of “Indigenous Peoples and local communities” terminology

The grouping of local communities with Indigenous Peoples has been advanced in a number of international instruments and has been the subject of significant discussion since its emergence in 1992. The term local communities has no generally accepted definition at international law,

1 Kent McNeil, “The Doctrine of Discovery Reconsidered: Reflecting on Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies, by Robert J Miller, Jacinta Ruru, Larissa Behrendt, and Tracey Lindberg, and Reconciling Sovereignities: Aboriginal Nations and Canada, by Felix Hoehn” *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 53, no. 2 (2016) article 10 at 699.

2 Under the *Constitution Act*, “aboriginal peoples” refer to Indigenous Peoples – First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in what is now known as Canada.



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having appeared in the context of references to the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples for the first time in Article 8(j) of the CBD. At the same time the CBD was adopted, references to “indigenous peoples and local communities” were also utilized in the context of Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (“Rio Declaration”).

While the context of the term’s origin remains somewhat muddled, one must consider that the CBD and provisions on Article 8(j) were adopted in 1992, without the benefit of the 2007 UN Declaration and its affirmations of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and their distinct status as collective rights holders. Hence, instead of recognition of Indigenous Peoples and their critical contributions to the conservation of biodiversity, we see the intertwining and conflating of “indigenous and local communities,” with an associated qualifier speaking to the embodiment of “traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.” It is unclear how the qualifier, which may have been relevant in the context of the development of the text to some member states, has been applied.

Since then, various attempts have been made to consider the concept of local communities. However, a clear definition and associated rights remain ambiguous and elusive. Characteristics used to describe local communities are broad and seem to encompass a wide range of populations. Several processes have sought to provide clarity to the concept:

- Local communities, which may also be described as traditional communities, may also include peoples of Indigenous descent. Additionally, these communities may be culturally diverse and occur on all inhabited continents, and include small farming communities in France, long-term established rice and fish farmers in Asia, and the non-indigenous traditional rural communities whose economic activities and cultural identities are based on their use of specific assemblages of plant and animal diversity.<sup>3</sup>
- Self-identification of or the right to self-identify should be the foremost guiding characteristic in relation to the notion of local community, and that because of the diversity of local communities, the list of characteristics should be broad to reflect the unique cultural, ecological, and social circumstances at play.<sup>4</sup>

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3 In a 2011 note prepared by the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for the Expert Workshop on Data Collection and Disaggregation for Indigenous Peoples in the context of the CBD, the Secretariat concluded that “local community is a very ambiguous term”, and the issue of cultural identity remains a multidimensional and complex issue. [UNEP/CBD/AHEG/LCR/INF/1](#)

4 Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting of Local Community Representatives in 2011 [UNEP/CBD/WG8J/7/8/Add.1\\*](#) at pg. 12. Note: This paper and its characteristics were cited with endorsement in the Decision Adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, as published in [UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/XI/14](#) at paras. 17-19. Said text also remains the basis for the Secretariat advice on local communities, as noted in Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2019). [Glossary of Relevant Key Terms and Concepts within the Context of Article 8\(j\) and Related Provisions](#), 9 p. (CBD Guidelines Series) at pg. 2.



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- A human population with a clearly defined spatial identity, with members who are interacting with their environment in localized, physically proximate ways, and are small enough to enable face- to-face interactions amongst all members. Such communities may be long-standing (‘traditional’) or relatively new and may consist of a single or multiple ethnic identities.<sup>5</sup>

The significant challenge with such a broad definition and lack of a clear set of characteristics, with self-identification as the foremost guiding characteristic, is the absolute breadth of individuals, organizations, or entities to whom the notion of local communities could arguably be applied. In 2011, at an Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting of Local Community Representatives convened within the context of the CBD, a wide variety of representative asserted their presence as local communities, including small traditional farming communities in France and Europe, rubber-trappers, fisher folk, and traditional farmers of Venezuela; semi-nomadic and nomadic pastoralists of Iran; as well as shrimp farmer communities from Honduras. These examples stand in stark contrast to Afro-descendent communities in the Latin American region, such as those in Brazil and French Guyana, among many other regions, who struggle with a lack of land tenure and access to resources. These communities descended from African freed or escaped slaves in the region and exhibit systematic relationships to territories and biological resources, and cultures characterized by oral traditional knowledge, rituals, beliefs, and customs.<sup>6</sup>

Considering the broad nature of engagement on the notion of local communities, the term contains a vast spectrum of individuals and entities that could ultimately fit these characteristics. As reflected by a legal expert from Brazil attending the meeting of the 2011 Ad Hoc Expert Group, legal decisions that touched on the identification of local communities were vague, inconsistent, and imprecise.<sup>7</sup> This is in contrast to the distinct status that Indigenous Peoples have and the unique international legal instruments that apply to them.

### **2.3. First Nations Major Concerns of the Grouping of “Indigenous Peoples and local communities”**

First Nations do not accept being conflated with local communities for four reasons:

**The grouping of First Nations with local communities as a seemingly inseparable unit diminishes the distinct rights and status of First Nations, and Indigenous Peoples more broadly.** First Nations, as Peoples with the right of self-determination, are distinct from minority populations, local communities, or other civil society stakeholders. First Nations have worked tirelessly, both domestically and internationally, to secure recognition of their distinct rights and legal status and ensuring that their unique priorities are addressed. Among many others, these include the right to self-determination, the right to free, prior, and informed consent, and the right to conservation

5 Kothari, Ashish with Corrigan, Colleen, Jonas, Harry, Neumann, Aurélie, and Shrumm, Holly. (eds). 2012. *Recognising and Supporting Territories and Areas Conserved By Indigenous Peoples And Local Communities: Global Overview and National Case Studies*. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, ICCA Consortium, Kalpavriksh, and Natural Justice, Montreal, Canada. Technical Series no. 64, 160 pp. [“Conservation Case Study”] at pg. 155.

6 Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting of Local Community Representatives in 2011 [UNEP/CBD/WG8J/7/8/Add.1\\*](#)

7 Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting of Local Community Representatives in 2011 [UNEP/CBD/WG8J/7/8/Add.1\\*](#) at pg. 8.



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and use of territories, lands, waters, and resources. Concerns surrounding the terminology have grown as rights-based approaches to conservation and climate action are adopted in international conventions. Finalized in 2022, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) under the CBD is filled with references to the “rights of IPLCs”. Grouping and conflating First Nations and other Indigenous Peoples with local communities gives rise to the erroneous perception that these distinct populations have comparable rights, which only serves to undermine the full breadth of First Nations and Indigenous Rights within the context of international instruments. As the grouping of “IPLCs” as a concept continues to permeate international instruments and related academia, it must end to ensure the necessary distinctions for First Nations.

**Additionally, the grouping of Indigenous Peoples with local communities is inconsistent with the recognition of First Nations rights in domestic law and policy.** While discussed and characterized loosely in international text, the concept and status of local communities remains undefined and ambiguous, with no application within the Canadian context. This is in stark contrast to First Nations who Canada has recognized as having distinct rights and status in domestic law and policy, including by way of constitutional recognition of their Aboriginal and Treaty rights, the recognition of rights within the context of national and provincial legislation, First Nations self-government and land claims agreements, and ultimately with the enshrinement of the UN Declaration by way of UNDRIPA as federal law. Within Canada, the term local communities is often used to imply communities organized by geographic area (e.g., urban, or suburban neighbourhoods, coastal areas, rural areas) within a broader civil society. The grouping of Indigenous Peoples with local communities remains inconsistent with the extensive domestic and national law, policy, and jurisprudence on the distinct status, rights, and role of First Nations, as well as arguably other Indigenous Peoples within Canada.

**Further, the legal status of local communities and the meaning of this term is uncertain.** The term local communities has not been legally defined by Canada, other States, or inter-governmental organizations. Local communities are not a self-organized constituency within any intergovernmental organization, such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and CBD. The term unfortunately remains so broad that it could arguably cover any or all individuals or groups of stakeholders, irrespective of their legal, political, or cultural orientation in contrast to First Nations or other Indigenous Peoples. Grouping Indigenous Peoples with local communities therefore has the potential to undermine the effectiveness and impact of First Nations advocacy, the advancement of their priorities, as well as the equitable participation of First Nations in intergovernmental and international fora. The full and effective participation of First Nations as internationally recognized Indigenous Peoples is and remains necessary to the legitimacy of international instruments which could have bearing on their rights and interests.

**The distinct rights and status of First Nations is premised on their inherent and collective rights to their lands, territories, and resources, as well as the right to self-determination as Peoples.** First Nations are distinct self-determining peoples with collective rights – a key difference from other stakeholders which arguably encompasses local communities. As was noted earlier, European



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settlement did not terminate the interest of First Nations peoples arising from their historical occupation and use of the land, rather these interests and customary law survived the assertion of sovereignty. First Nations lived on the land in distinctive societies, with their own practices and traditions, and continue to do so today. This is the legacy which underpins domestic law and policy and Canada, and which justifies the continued advocacy of the AFN in relation to ensuring the recognition of First Nations and Indigenous Peoples as distinct rights holders.

Globally, Indigenous Peoples have also voiced major concerns about the proliferation of the “IPLC” terminology. A significant body of jurisprudence by UN human rights treaty bodies clarifies the distinct nature of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, motivating a series of comments from UN expert bodies mandated to monitor respect for and implementation of the UN Declaration on the distinction between Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

In particular, at its twenty-first (E/2022/43-E/C.19/2022/11) and twenty-second (E/2023/43term-E/C.19/2023/7) sessions of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the Permanent Forum “urged all United Nations entities and States parties to treaties concerning the environment, biodiversity, and the climate to eliminate the use of the term local communities in conjunction with [I]ndigenous [P]eoples, so that the term “indigenous peoples and local communities” would be abolished”. As well, the Permanent Forum in its twenty-second session welcomed the term “Indigenous Peoples” capitalized in the United Nations Editorial Manual.

The UNPFII, the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples have all issued individual and combined statements calling for a cessation on the use of the IPLC terminology.<sup>8</sup> Issued in a joint statement between the three entities in July 2023:

*In response to this situation, we take our responsibility seriously in assisting UN entities in respecting and promoting the realization of these rights consistent with those affirmed in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Therefore, we, the UN mechanisms of Indigenous Peoples urge all UN entities in their methods of work to refrain from conflating, associating, combining, or equating Indigenous Peoples with non-indigenous entities, such as minorities, vulnerable groups, or “local communities.” We further request that all UN Member State parties to treaties related to the environment, biodiversity, and climate cease using the term “local communities” alongside “Indigenous Peoples,” so that the term “Indigenous Peoples and local communities” is no longer used.*

Lastly, in February of 2024, the three entities issued another outcomes document after a meeting in Rome, Italy, to address the problematic “IPLC” terminology. This joint document also provided eight recommendations to address the challenges posed by the use of the “IPLC” terminology and to recognize, respect, and promote the distinct, inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> July 2023, UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. [Joint Statement](#).

<sup>9</sup> 26-28 February 2024, UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. [Outcome Document](#).





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Discussions on this issue have emerged at the CBD, UNFCCC, Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and the Treaty on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdictions (BBNJ) under the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS), to name a few.

While the use of the terminology draws comparisons between the biocultural approaches that both groups may share especially in the context of environmental multi-lateral agreements, it is necessary to distinguish between them and for each group to advocate for and to represent themselves and their distinct rights, interests, and priorities. The broad concept of local communities could be applied to a variety of groups that may live in proximity to Indigenous Peoples and might have different rights and/or directly opposing interests. Falsely equating the groups under the “IPLC” terminology also serves to undermine the full and effective participation and a meaningful understanding of the issues and interests of both groups.

## **3. Recommendations**

Given the implications and concerns that First Nations and Indigenous Peoples have been raising about the terminology “Indigenous Peoples and local communities,” we echo the recommendations in the recent outcome document and provide seven recommendations below for all UN entities, Parties, and non-Indigenous organizations, both international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs):

### ***1) Reaffirm the distinct status and rights of First Nations, as rights-holders, in all discussions.***

First Nations have distinct rights as Indigenous Peoples, as affirmed under international instruments, such as the UN Declaration, as well as reflected in domestic legal instruments. These collective rights, particularly to self-determination, must be reaffirmed and upheld by all in all UN discussions, especially those related to climate change, biodiversity, the environment, and intellectual property. The UN Declaration outlines the minimum standards of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and all levels of governments must be expected to ensure that these rights are respected, safeguarded, and given effect.

### ***2) Implement the use of capital letters in all UN texts when referring to Indigenous Peoples, as well as Indigenous persons, Indigenous children, and Indigenous women, as adopted in December 2022 by the UN General Assembly (Resolution A/77/203).***

As adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution, the capitalization of “Indigenous Peoples” in the UN Editorial Manual reinforces the importance of recognizing the distinction between Indigenous Peoples and local communities. This must be adopted by all UN fora.



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### ***3) Remove the false equivalency of rights between Indigenous Peoples and local communities to reflect the rights reaffirmed in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples***

All UN entities, state parties, and non-governmental organizations must exercise caution when referencing the rights of Indigenous Peoples, especially in the context of the UN Declaration, to avoid conflating these internationally recognized rights with those uncertain rights of local communities. The UN Declaration affirms the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples while making no references to local communities. While our understanding is that some States utilize the term local communities as a misnomer for Indigenous Peoples, it should be noted, as outlined in the Articles on self-determination within the UN Declaration, that Indigeneity is not predicated on State recognition.

### ***4) Uphold the clear distinction between “knowledge of Indigenous Peoples” and “local knowledge” in all UN texts and cease the use of the term “Indigenous and local knowledge”***

Indigenous Knowledge – sometimes referred to as traditional knowledge, Indigenous knowledge systems, or Indigenous sciences – are complex knowledge systems based on the distinct worldviews of Indigenous Peoples. These knowledge systems reflect the unique cultures, language, innovations and practices, governance, values, and legal systems that Indigenous Peoples have held in perpetuity and passed down from generation to generation. These systems are place-based, cumulative, and dynamic, reflecting sacred relationships that Indigenous Peoples have with their natural world. While the term “local knowledge” elicits an understanding of place-based knowledge, these two types of knowledge are not comparable as the use of the collective term “Indigenous and local knowledge” would appear to suggest.

### ***5) Separate “Indigenous Peoples and local communities” as a collective concept in all UN discussions, including climate, biodiversity, and intellectual property.***

For the various reasons outlined in this paper and urged by the three targeted UN mechanisms on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, all UN entities and state parties to treaties concerning but not limited to the environment, biodiversity, and climate, must eliminate the use of the term local communities in conjunction with Indigenous Peoples as an inseparable unit. This terminology change is key to ensuring the continued respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

### ***6) Support First Nations and Indigenous Peoples as they push for enhanced participation status in all elements of the United Nations.***

Indigenous Peoples have only had two paths of participation at the UN – either to be represented by member states or as non-governmental organizations. As neither of these options reflect the distinct rights that Indigenous Peoples have to self-determination and governance, Indigenous Peoples have long been advocating for independent status at the UN and was later affirmed



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through a commitment by states at the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014. Member states must honour their commitment and support the efforts of First Nations and Indigenous Peoples as they push for enhanced participation status at the UN and its various fora, in accordance with the recommendations put forth by Indigenous experts and entities at the 2022 Human Rights Council expert workshop on enhanced participation (A/HRC/53/44).

***7) Support inter-agency collaboration to ensure that UN bodies on, but not limited to, climate change, biodiversity, and intellectual property endorse previous and future recommendations from the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.***

We note a continued lack of inter-agency collaboration between UN fora such as the UNFCCC, UN CBD, and the various UN mechanisms on matters regarding the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Despite repeated calls from the UNPFII and joint statements by the UNPFII, EMRIP, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Secretariats of the CBD and UNFCCC have not made any movement to make the necessary changes to distinguish between Indigenous Peoples and local communities, by ceasing the use of the collective term “Indigenous Peoples and local communities” in their documents or to adopt the capitalization of the term “Indigenous Peoples” as reflected in the UN Editorial Manual. Inter-agency collaboration within these targeted UN Mechanisms must ensure that references to rights-based approaches to climate action and conservation of biodiversity, and the critical role of Indigenous Peoples to this work, is consistent.

## **4. Conclusion**

In this paper, we discussed the emergence of the terminology of “Indigenous Peoples and local communities” and raised First Nations’ concerns with the continued use of this collective concept. We strongly encourage Canada and other UN member states, all other levels of governments, UN entities, and NGOs to act upon our recommendations. Our intention is not to minimize the needs and priorities of those that identify as local communities, rather, it is to end the harm to both groups with the continued use of this terminology. Going forward, self-determination and self-representation will be crucial, in the same way as Indigenous Peoples have organized over decades to be recognized as a constituency under intergovernmental organizations.

For First Nations, the erosion of the interrelated, interdependent, and indivisible rights of First Nation is unacceptable. Canada and other member states have reaffirmed their solemn commitment to respect, promote, and advance the rights of Indigenous Peoples of the world and to uphold the principles of the UN Declaration, which is an essential guiding light for our work together. We must not let it be diminished.